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BABYLONIAN AND HEBREW VIEWS OF LIFE AFTER DEATH

by

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PART I

BABYLONIAN VIEW

OF THE LIFE AFTER DEATH

Introduction

Babylonian and Hebrew views of life after death are very similar and as Dr. R. H. Charles says, they are ultimately from the same source. (1). According to Dr. S. H. Langdon this common source is the ancient Sumerian conception, (2) which he described as follows, "Although the ancient Sumerians, whose beliefs were transmitted to the Semites, conceived of immediate separation of body and soul at mortal dissolution, the latter passing at once to Aralu, the land of the dead, yet the soul of etimmu maintained a lively interest in the body which it had left behind." (3)

This statement gives us a good start for our further study because we see at least three elements in the life after death. The first is the soul; the second, Aralu; and the third is the dead body.

Chapter I. The Soul

In many languages the words for "spirit" denote primarily "breath" or wind. As for instance, Sanskrit prana; Greek, πνεῦμα, ἀνεμος; Latin, spirtus, anima; German, Geist, and English, ghost, which are etymologically connected with gust. This is also the conception of the Semites. The Babylonians believed

(1) R. H. Charles, A Critical History, p. 34

(2) Langdon, "Babylonian Eschatology" in Essays In Modern Theology and Related Subjects, pp.144

(3) op cit p.144

that the soul was the breath, napishtu, which corresponds to nephesh in Hebrew, and Arabic nafs, and Syriac nafsha. (1)

In Babylonian belief, the napishtu (the breath) is said to go out of a man, but the disembodied spirit is not called napishtu, as it is in Hebrew, rather it is called etimmu (2). According to Thompson, it is literally "the thing which is snatched away" (3) and it has supernatural powers. Etimmu corresponds to ruah (spirit) in Hebrew. Though etimmu is the proper word for a departed spirit, utukku is often used. In the epic of Gilgamesh, Gilgamesh appeals to the Nelgal to restore his friend Enkidu to him. His prayer is answered, for the god opens the earth and the utukku of Enkidu rises up "Like the wind." That is probably a transparent spectre in the human shape of Enkidu (4). It is difficult to determine the difference between utukku and etimmu (5).

There are two conceptions of the state of the departed spirits. One is that they rest in Aralu, the other is that they hover over the earth.

Chapter II. Aralu

Aralu is the Babylonian name of some subterranean cave or hollow in which all the dead without distinction are gathered. The name given to this place in Sumerian is Arali and it corresponds in every particular to the early Hebrew

(1) Patton, Spiritism, p. 200

(2) Patton writes it etimmu, but R. C. Thompson writes it ekimmu. This depends upon how it is transliterated.

(3) Thompson, The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia, Vol. I p.xxi

(4) Thompson, op cit p.xxv. (5) Thompson, loc. cit.

conception of sheol. The etymology of Aralu is obscure. But according to Langdon, ara-li-a is used with the same meaning as Karmu which means ruin. Therefore this might mean "place of desolation" (1).

The popular fancy conceived this place of the dead after the likeness of a tomb. Names such as Sumerian word kigal, "vast (underground) dwelling," unugi "dark dwelling," and ir kallu, "the abode of the dead" designate both tomb and underworld alike. It is also called nakbu, "the Hollow" or "the Hole of the Earth."

Ordinarily this was entered through a gate in the western horizon. The west was the region of darkness and death, and the east was the region of life and light.

None can come out from Aralu, therefore it is called the irishit la tari, the land of no return, and also "Aralu which none should behold" (2).

The epic of "The Descent of Ishtar to Aralu" (3) shows us the popular ideas concerning the Babylonian Hades (Aralu). According to this poem, Aralu is a land without light, where dust is the only food, and solitude reigns supreme. Seven gates guard the descent into Aralu, at each of which a guardian challenges the visitor. In the interior, Ereskigal holds her

(1) Langdon, Babylonian Eschatology, p.157

(2) Langdon, Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms, p. 219, Raw IV. 24 no. 2.

(3) Langdon, Mythology of All Races, Vol. V. Semitic. pp.326ff.

court, assisted by her messenger Namtaru, chief of demons, and the Anunaki, servants of the under world.

The Gilgamesh Epic (1) shows us the same thing in more detail. In this epic, Enkidu, is created by Aruru (Col.iii), the goddess of childbirth, but, when slain by the wiles of the goddess Ishtar, goes to Aralu as the rest of mankind do. Gilgamesh, the hero of the epic, wails and begins lamentation (Tablet. viii, col.ii). Though he is two-thirds god and one-third man, he is seized with the fear that he too, like Enkidu, may be dragged to the world of the dead. He seeks to fathom the mystery of death and in the hope of escaping Aralu, undertakes a long journey in quest of Utnapishtim to learn from him how he had attained immortality. Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh the story of his escape from the destructive deluge, (Tablet. ix, Col.i). Then Utnapishtim teaches him the way of relief by mystic rites, but they cannot cure his friend. Gilgamesh is anxious to find out at least how his friend and companion, Enkidu, fares in Aralu. In response to his appeal, the shade of Enkidu rises before him.

Gilgamesh says:

(87) "Tell me, O my friend, tell me O my friend,

Tell me the law of the lower world, which thou
hast seen."

To which Endidu replies:

(1) This by the standard Assyrian edition of the legend of Gilgamesh, which is translated and commented by Dr. Langdon in his book, The Mythology of All Races, Vol. V. Semitic, p.234 ff.

(89) "Not shall I tell thee, my friend, not shall I
tell thee,
If I tell thee the law of the lower world which I
have seen,
Sit thee down, weep."

In the words of Langdon, "Here the description of Aralu is not well preserved. Enkidu mentions the worm that eats, the dust that fills, and those that sit." The poem ends with the following dialogue between Enkidu and Gilgamesh:

"Him whose corpse was cast on the plain, didst thou see?
Yea, I saw;
His ghost rests not in the lower world. Him whose ghost
has none to remember him, didst thou see?
Yea I saw.
Leaving of the pot, crumb of bread thrown in the street
he eats."

This epic shows us three things:

- (A) Death is an unmitigated evil. If one gets into it, no one can get him out of it.
 - (B) No God can give immortality.
 - (C) If one's corpse was cast on the plain, his ghost rests not in the lower world. And also if one's ghost has none to remember him, it goes out in the street and eats there.
- (A) The dead are ruled by the goddess Allatu, and watched by Nergal, who does not release once he has seized a man,(1).

(1) Gilgamesh Epic, Tablet. xii, Col. iii, Line 18

Chapter III. Immortality

In many languages there is no word for "die" but only for "be killed" (1). This shows us that all people wish to have everlasting life, or if this is impossible, at least a longer life. Thus Nebuchadnezzar prays, "Make my years to endure like the bricks of Ibarra, prolong them into eternity" (2). Tiglath Pileser says of his grandfather: "The work of his hands and his sacrifices were well pleasing to the gods, and thus he attained unto extreme old age" (3). Babylonians offered sacrifices and spelled incantations to God in order to receive long life. But death was the "inevitable" "night-like" fate. None could escape the fate of death.

Marduk bore the titles il Tu-Tu, "The Giver of Birth" and il Zi-ukkin, "The Life of All the Gods" (4) and il Asarri, "The God who brings forth Vegetation" (5). But his most usual attribute was muballist mitu, "The Restorer of the Dead to Life." According to Morgenstern, however, this title did not give any hope of resurrection to Aralu, because it meant merely "The restorer to life of him who is sick unto death" (6). Paton says that, "According to the primitive conception, the soul

(1) Paton, Spiritism, p.4.

(2) and (3) Jeremias, The Babylonian Conception of Heaven and Hell, p.4.

(4) Morgenstern, The Doctrine of Sin in the Babylonian Religion, Keilinschriften Bibliothek. VI, I,34,i.

(5) Morgenstern, op cit p.52; Rowlinson's Selection. Vol.IV,p.57.

(6) Morgenstern, op cit p.52, note 5.

left the body in illness, or in unconsciousness, and drew near to the Underworld. For a time it was doubtful whether it would remain with the shades or return to earth. The god who prevented its final separation from its body was called "quickener of the dead," but that there could be any resurrection after the body had been buried and dissolution had set in, there is no evidence" (1).

In this study of immortality, we must refer to two important pieces of literature: (A) The Epic of Paradise, and (B) The Myth of Adapa.

(A) The Epic of Paradise:

This epic has its origin in a Sumerian myth. Briefly the story is as follows. Enki, the water god, and his consort, Ninella or Damkina, ruled over mankind in paradise, which the epic places in Dilmun. In that land there was no infirmity, no sin, and man grew not old. But for a reason which is all too evident, Enki, the god of wisdom, became dissatisfied with man and decided to overpower him with his waters. A flood followed, enduring for nine months, and man dissolved in the waters. But Nintub had planned to save the king and certain pious ones. These she summoned to the river's bank where they embarked in a boat. After the flood, Nintub is represented in conversation with those who had escaped. Tagtug is here also dignified by the title of a god. He became a gardner and was instructed

(1) Paton, Spiritism, p.222

concerning the plants and trees whose fruit the gods permitted him to eat. It seems that Nintub had forbidden him to eat of the cassia, but he ate anyway, whereupon Ninharsag afflicted him with bodily weakness, and he lost immortality (1).

In this epic man was not mortal from the beginning, but by eating the forbidden cassia he became mortal.

(B) Myth of Adapa (2)

This, another Semitic myth, called "Legend or Myth of Adapa" explains how man could not get immortality. We must remember also that the Eridu version makes man mortal from the beginning, and, further, as Langdon points out, that the Nippur version likewise assumes that man did not possess immortal life (3).

The tablets which recorded this myth were found in the Library of Ashurbanipali (668-626 B.C.) and also at Tell el-Amarna; the latter belongs to Amenhotep IV (or Ikhnaton) (1375-1358 B.C.). This myth was spread by the theological School of Eridu, and it explains how mankind lost eternal life.

Adapa was the son of Ea who broke the wings of the south wind. Then the god Anu was very angry and cried, "Let them bring this one to me." Therefore Ea caused Adapa to be covered with boils and put sack-cloth upon him. This cloth of mourning brought the sympathy of the Gods.

(1) Langdon, Sumerian Epic of Paradise, Babylonian Sec. Vol.X, #1.

(2) Langdon, The Mythology of All Races. Vol.V, Semitic, p.177.

(3) Langdon, Sumerian Epic of Paradise, p.50.

"They answered-----Tammiz

And Gishzid, words of mercy to Anu

Speaking, he calmed and his heart was seized with fear,
(saying)

Why has Ea caused man, the unclean,

To perceive the things of Heaven and Earth? A mind

Cunning has he bestowed upon him and created him unto fame.

What shall we do for him? Bread of life

Get for him, let him eat: Water of life They got for him,

But he drank not

.....

Come, O Adapa, why hast thou not eaten and not drunk?

Thou shalt not live....."

Adapa replied that it was Ea who ordered him to act in
this manner, whereupon Anu ordered his messenger to take him
back to earth.

In the myth of the Descent of Ishtar to Aralu, which I
have quoted previously, Innini says:

O Father Amanki, wise lord.....

The plant of life thou knowest, the water of life thou
knowest,

This one restore to life for me (1).

As we read, life of water is in the hand of God and it is not
given to man. The eternal life is only in the hand of God but
it is not permitted to man.

(1) Langdon, The Mythology of All Races, Vol.V, Semitic,p.328

Chapter IV. The Offerings to the Dead

In the Babylonian conception, the condition of the etimmu or departed spirit in Aralu depends upon the offering. The spirits remained there receiving the offerings and libations paid to them by their descendants and relations on earth. If these attentions should cease, and the spirit of the dead man be forgotten, it would be forced by hunger and thirst to come forth from its abode in Hades and seek on earth the food and water which no longer filtered through to satisfy its wants.

Such conceptions can be proved by the recent archaeological discoveries. For example, we find in the report of the excavations at Babylon by Robert Koldewey, the following: "The graves on the whole were not rich in deposits. The deceased generally retained some of his wonted adornments of necklaces, rings, fibulae, bracclets, and anklets....All sorts of pottery vessels were numerous, especially beakers and bowls." (1) Such deposits show us the fact that the future life of the soul depended upon the proper care being given to its abandoned body. An inscription of Ur^kagina which goes back to 2900 B.C. gives us the earliest important reference concerning it. According to Langdon's quotation, and his translation, it was as follows: "When a dead man was placed in his coffin his ~~drink~~, kas (which was a kind of beer), three jars, his breads eighty, one bed, one kid-sag, as funeral offering he received" (2). Another

(1) Koldewey, The Excavations At Babylon, pp.276-277

(2) Langdon, Bab. Eschatology, .145, Col.ix, 26-34 on cone A, B, viii, 32-38

interesting passage states, "30 ka of barley the wailer received. If a (dead) man were placed in the dark (chamber) of Ea, his drink, 4 jars, his breads, 240, 60 ka of barley, as (his) offering (?) he received. 30 ka (1) of barley the wailer received." In the other document, we read as follows: "One sheep for the priest-king, one kid for the priest of the goddess Nina, one lamb and one kid for the priest of the goddess Ninmarki, have been eaten in the assembly. One sheep for the priest king, one sheep for the chief scribe, in the month gis-dim-ka-na at the celebration of the mortuary sacrifice have been eaten." (2).

Such tablets show us the belief that the soul of a man was nourished in Aralu by the memorial meals consumed in his memory by his kinsmen of earth. In the case of rulers, priests, and important persons, the memorial meal formed part of the official religion.

The spirits of the dead, who did not receive their due respect at the hands of the living would rise out of Aralu to torment humanity. Therefore when one has such a spirit, he must offer the parentalis to seven statues, for, according to Babylonian theology, the devils were seven in number, and were conceived of as wicked souls. Thus we see that basic in the Babylonian conception of life after death was the inseparableness of the living from the dead.

(1) Ka was a small vessel of less than half a litre.

(2) Allotte de la Fuiji, Documents Presargoniques no. 80, translated by Langdon, Babylonian Eschatology p.150.

Chapter V. The Evil Spirits

As I have stated previously, Babylonians had paid much attention to the sacrifice to the souls of the dead. They believed that if they stopped such practices the spirits would come up to the earth and hover around. They had many reasons for believing that the spirits would come back to earth. Some of them were as follows:

(A) Spirits became hungry and restless, if their descendants ceased to pay them due rites or offer sacrifices on which they might feed.

(B) They obtained no resting-place in Aralu if their earthly bodies remained unburied.

(C) (Added by Assyrians) The bones of the dead were moved from the tombs, leaving the spirits to become restless and to roam about the world.

To these spirits, Babylonians ascribed many of their bodily ills. Spirits had the power to inflict harm or disease on those whom they attacked in order to secure the payment of their dues. Therefore sorcerers believed that their exorcisms could "lay" such disturbed spirits. Many of the medical tablets give elaborate prescriptions of drugs and ceremonies to be employed "when a ghost seizes on a man." Thus, these unresting spirits were called evil spirits. The Tablet C. C., Plate XLI (1) contains this:

(1) Thompson, The Devils & The Evil Spirits of Babylonia, Vol. II.

"The Evil Spirit, the evil Demon, the evil Ghost, the evil Devil,
From the earth have come forth;
From the Underworld unto the land they have come forth,
In heaven they are unknown,
On earth they are not understood,
They know not how to stand
They know not how to sit,
No food they eat,
No water they drink....."

In the Fourth Tablet of the Series, so called "Evil Spirits," various disembodied ghosts are exorcised and addressed individually. For example we find a passage:

"Whether thou art a ghost unburied,
Or a ghost that none careth for,
Or a ghost with none to make offerings to it...."
(Tablet IV, Col. V, line 5-7)

The Sumerians and Babylonians believed that there were six chief evil ghosts. They were: Utukku Limnu (Evil spirit), Alu Limnu (evil demon), Etimma Limnu (evil ghost), Gallu Limnu (evil devil), Ilu Limnu (evil god), and Rabisu Limnu (evil fiend) (1). But this list does not include all the powers of evil, for these are very often aided by other various forms of malignant spirits.

We can place these evil ghosts in three groups. First,

(1) Thompson, The Devil & The Evil Spirits of Babylonia. Vol. I
p. xxiv

the souls of men and women who, having died, changed their earthly shape for an incorporeal one. Second, the supernatural being who never was earthly, a phantom or demon, often has such grotesque or horrid shape as savage imagination might invent. Third, a class of demons, half-ghostly, half-man, the offspring of intermarriage between human beings and the spirit world, just as we find demigods of half divine origin (1).

If a man wandered far from his fellows into haunted places, an evil spirit fastened upon him, tormenting him until a priest would drive it away with exorcisms. In the Asakki Marsuti, (Fever Sickness,) Tablet E, we find (Plate II):

"May the evil Spirit (stand) aside
May the evil Demon (stand) aside,
May the evil Genius (stand) aside
May the evil Ghost (stand) aside
May the evil Devil (stand) aside
May a kindly Spirit be present
May a kindly Genius be present,
May a kindly Guardian be present
May a kindly Thought be present
That this man may become clean, become bright,
Into the favouring hands of his good may this man (be commended)." (2)

There are certain conditions which will make spirits

(1) Thompson, Semitic Magic, p.2

(2) Thompson, Devil & Evil Spirits of Babylonia, Vol. II

unrestful. Men who departed from this life before fulfilling certain duties could obtain no rest and were compelled to remain as disembodied spirits to haunt mankind until they were laid to rest by exorcism. We find an illustrative passage as follows:

"He that hath died of hunger in prison,
He that hath died of thirst in prison,
The hungry man who in his hunger hath not smelt the smell
of food,
He whom the bank of a river hath let perish, and he hath died,
He that hath died in the desert or marshes,
He that a storm hath overwhelmed in the desert,
The Night-wraith that hath no husband,
The Night-w^eraith that hath no wife,
He that hath posterity and he that hath none." (1)

The spirits of women who died in child birth or while nursing their babes will not rest in Aralu. Rather, they will return in some form to seek their children. Therefore some exorcism is necessary to give these spirits rest. We find an example as follows:

"Whether thou be a hag-demon,
Or a robber-sprite,
Or a harlot (that hath died) whose body is sick,
Or a woman (that hath died) in travail,
Or a weeping woman (that had died) with a babe at the breast,

(1) Thompson, Semitic Magic, p.19

.....

.....

By Ea mayst thou be exorcised." (1)

And also the spirits of men or maidens who have reached a marriageable age but die unmarried are restless, disembodied spirits.

In Utukki Limnuti, Tablet IV, Col. IV, line 45-46 we find the following passage:

"Whether thou art a ghost that hath come from the earth,

Or a phantom of night that hath no couch,

Or a woman (that hath died) a virgin,

Or a man (that hath died) unmarried,

.....

.....

Until thou departest from the body of the man, the son of

his god,

Thou shalt have no food....." (2)

(1) Thompson, The Devil & Evil Spirits of Babylon, Vol. I, pp. 55-56

(2) Thompson, op cit Vol. I, pp. 39,45.

PART II

HEBREW VIEW

OF THE LIFE AFTER DEATH

Introduction

The Babylonian and Hebrew views of life after death have two centres. These two views are similar in that each regards the soul as continuing after death, and in the conception of the dwelling place. There are two conceptions of this dwelling place of the soul; one is that it hovers near the grave, and the other is that it rests in Aralu or in Sheol. The Babylonian and Hebrew conceptions are very similar on these points, but complications of the Hebrew view arise because there is fusion of the two main currents of thought in Hebrew religious history. One is the popular belief of spiritism and Sheol, which developed by itself without receiving any influence from Yahwism, and the other was the conception of the spirit which developed side by side with the religion of Yahweh.

I will discuss the conception of Sheol in the first chapter, then I will state the development of the conception of the spirit.

Chapter I. Sheol

Even in the oldest parts of the Old Testament, death is never thought of as being actually the complete end of existence. The Hebrews, like all the civilised nations of antiquity, firmly believed in a continued existence after the death of the body. They believed in two abodes of the dead, one in the tomb, and the other in Sheol.

(A) The Tomb:

During the excavation of Gezer, in the second burial

cave, the remains of fourteen males and one female were found. Besides these corpses, four spear-heads with hollow sockets were found. One of them was a splendid spear-head, seventeen inches long, with an ornamental blade. Also a knife, flanged for hafting-plates of wood or bone, and a common type of axe-head were excavated in the cave. There were also a cow's horn and a three-legged stone fire-dish for cooking. The latter was broken, and inverted over some sheep bones, no doubt the remains of a food deposit,(1). According to the Ninth Quarterly Report on the Excavations of Gezer, "offerings of food, and probably of drink also, were regularly deposited with the dead. In most of the tombs, bowls containing bones of the food-animals were found.....In the one case where large jars were found, they were lying on their sides, and the dipping jugs were not inside them. There were, however, in every tomb a great number of small jugs" (2). Such reports show us their beliefs of life after death. They believed that life, as on this world, would continue in the tombs.

They believed also in the existence of a certain community after death. Thus in Genesis xxv, 8, 17 (p) we read that Abraham and Ishmael each "died in a good old age, and old man and full of ages, and was gathered to his people." In Genesis xv, 15, we find the following passage, "But thou (Abra-

(1) Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement, 1903 p.16. R. A. S. Macalister, Second Quarterly Report on Excavation of Gezer.

(2) ibid 1904, pp.328ff, Ninth Quarterly Report

ham) shalt go to thy fathers in peace, thou shalt be buried in a good old age." In Genesis xlix, 29: "And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people, bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite." Thus the object of burial in the family grave was clearly to introduce the departed into the society of his ancestors.

(B) Sheol:

According to W. L. Wardle, Aralu has its origin in the Sumerian Arali (1). As we see it in the inscriptions of Sargon of Assyria (2), the lower world or hades is called "the mountain of Aralu." In this conception, the earth itself was regarded as a mountain, and the cave is pictured as a hollow within a mountain. A conception of this kind must have arisen among a people that was once familiar with a mountainous district. The Sumeric settlers of the Euphrates Valley probably brought the belief with them from an earlier mountain home, and the Semites received it from them. Though we can not be sure from inscriptions, we can imagine, as Charles did, that "the conception of Sheol goes back to the period when Hebrew clans lived in the Valley of the Euphrates, and shared this and other beliefs with the Babylonians of that time (3).

(1) Wardle, Israel and Babylon, p. 94 (London, Lollborn, 1925)

(2) Luckenbell, Ancient Records of Assyria & Babylonia, Vol. ii, p.37 (Chicago Univ. press)

(3) Charles, A Critical History, p.34

From the many opinions that connect the name Sheol with an Assyrian, two main origins seem to be derived: sha'al (to consult an oracle) and shilu (chamber) (1).

In Genesis xxxvii, 35 we read: "Jacob said, 'I will go down to sheol to my son mourning'".

(a) Sheol is the place of darkness. As for instance, in Job xvii, 13, we read as follows, "If I look for Sheol as my house; If I have spread my couch in the darkness." Also in Job x, 21: "To the land of darkness and blackness;" and in Psalms cxliii, 3: "He hath made me to dwell in dark-places, as those that have been long dead." These passages show us the same conception, that Sheol is the place of darkness.

(b) Sheol is the place of disorder. Job x, 22

"The land dark thick darkness,

The land of the shadow of death, without order."

(c) Sheol is the place of the dust.

Psalms xxx, 9: "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise thee?"

Job xvii, 16: "Will they go down to Sheol with me?

Or shall we descend to the dust?" (Ch. T.)

(d) Sheol is the land of hopelessness.

Isaiah xxxviii, 18: "For Sheol cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy trust.

(1) S. Mathews, "Sheol", Hastings Bible Dict. in One Vol., p.846

- (e) Sheol is out of the realm of God's reign.

Psalms lxxxviii 11, 13

"Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave?

Or thy faithfulness in Destruction?"

(But in the post-exilic period, this conception is changed and God's presence and His activity are both in Sheol.)

- (f) Sheol is the chamber where the dead go down and dwell.

Proverbs vii 27: "Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death."

There are gates in Sheol: Isaiah xxxviii 10: "I said,
'I must go hence in the noontide of my days,
And be consigned to the gates of Sheol
For the rest of my years.'" (Ch.T.)

We find the same idea in Job xxxviii 17; Psalms ix 14;
and cvii 18.

As for its location, Sheol was supposed to be not only
in the lowest parts of the earth, but also below the sea.
In the Book of Job xxvi 5, we read: "The shades quake,

The waters and their inhabitants from beneath,
Sheol lies bare before him;

And Abaddon has no covering." (Ch.T.)

In Psalms lxxi 20, we find: "Thou who hast showed us
many and sore troubles wilt quicken us again, and wilt
bring us up again from the depths of the earth."

- (g) Sheol is the place from where none return:

Job x 21, "Before I go whence I shall not return

To the land of darkness and of the shadow of death."

Thus, it was imagined as a monster that greedily swallows men down and is never sated (Isaiah v 14; Hab. ii 5; Prov. xxvii 20, xxx 15b.).

(h) There is no distinction of good and evil in Sheol:

Job iii 17-18: "There the wicked cease from troubling,

And there the weary are at rest.

There the prisoners are at ease together;

They hear not the voice of the task master."

(i) Sheol itself is no place of punishment nor of reward:

Ecclesiastes ix 5: "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten."

In due course, the conception of Sheol was naturally extended till it embraced the departed of all nations, and thus became the final abode of all mankind, good and bad alike. It has already reached this stage in Ezekiel xxxii; Isaiah xiv; and Job xxx 23.

Though the conceptions of the abode of the dead in the grave and in Sheol should be mutually exclusive, yet in the popular belief these are not strictly divided. In Isaiah xiv 11, we read as follows: "Thy pomp is brought down to Sheolthe worm is spread over thee, and the worms cover thee." There was some such confusion between the conceptions of the abode of the dead in the grave and in Sheol, and Sheol seems to be only a metaphorical equivalent for the grave, but they

did not believe that the grave itself was Sheol. And even where there is no grave, Sheol is thought of as the abode of the departed.

The Hebrews believed that though the dead went down to Sheol, they retained a large measure of their former intellectual and emotional faculties. Thus in Genesis iv 10 (J) we read: "And he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." That is, the soul of Abel that resides in the blood is conscious of the wrong done to it and demands vengeance. In Jeremiah xxxi 15, we find the following passage: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children." The dead, Rachel mourns over the captivity of her children. We find the same kind of story in I Samuel xxviii 16-19, where Saul speaks to a woman that had a familiar spirit at En-dor saying: "Bring me up Samuel," and the woman saw Samuel and said, "An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a robe (I Sam. xxviii 14); and Samuel said to Saul, "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up" (vs. 15). Thus the dead had the same characteristics in Sheol, as he had in this world. Therefore the dead was called "shadow" or shade. Among the Indo-Europeans, spirits of the dead were known as umbræ, "shadow," or "shades" (1).

(1) Paton, Spiritism, p. 71

Chapter II. 𐤓 𐤕 𐤕 𐤕 (rephā'im) Shades

There are two conceptions of the state of the departed spirits. One is that they rest in Sheol, the other is that they hover over the earth as we found in the Babylonian beliefs.

By the Israelites, as by the Babylonians, not to be buried was considered a frightful fate which one wished visited to only ones worst enemies. Thus in II Kings ix 10, we find a terrible passage as follows, "Dogs shall eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel, and none shall bury her." This is to be explained from the belief that the spirits of the unburied dead were obliged to drift about restlessly.

Even though the dead were buried, spirits could move at will with lightening-like rapidity to any place where they wished to manifest themselves. And they possessed the extraordinary power of entering into inanimate objects.

In the Old Testament, we can see the custom of marking the grave by a stone. For instance, the following is said of the grave of Rachel, "And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave, the same is the Pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day" (Gen. xxxv 20; J). Rachel was ancestress of the two tribes of Joseph and Benjamin, and her grave seems to have been located on the boundary of these tribes. Here her spirit lingers, for Jeremiah hears her lament over the approaching captivity of her children (Jer. xxxi 15). The custom is further illustrated by the act of Absalom. The prince had no son and for this reason he took and reared a pillar (maceba) in the King's

Vale (II Sam. xviii 18). The burial place of Miriam was Kadesh, "The Sanctuary" (Num xx, 1). Shechem, the burial-place of Joseph (Joshua xxiv, 32) was the site of a holy tree called "the oak of the oracle" or "the oak of the diviners" (Gen. xii, 6; Deut. xi, 30; Judg. ix, 37). We now see why so many tombs are mentioned in the Hebrew narrative. The cave where Abraham and Sarah are buried is important to the writer because it was in some sense a sanctuary.

Not only the souls of the great ancestor, but also the souls of bad men, like Absalom and Achan received the kind of reverence paid the gods (II Sam. xviii, 17; Joshua vii, 26). The reason is that these spirits like to hover around the place where their bodies were buried. Then the spirit of a bad man, being as truly supernatural as that of a good man, must be placated even more carefully.

Teraphim

It has been suggested that the Teraphim were originally images of ancestors. Schwally (1) connected the word with, רָפָה (raphah) and this would bring it into contact with the repha'im or 'shades' רָפָה of Isaiah xiv (2).

Its form and size were those of a man (I Sam. xix, 13). It was used in private houses (Gen xxxi, 19) as well as in temples (Judg. xvii, 5; xviii, 14ff; Hosea iii, 4), and was

(1) and (2) Schwally, *Leben nach dem Tode*, s36n....see Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible Vol. IV, pg. 718--J. A. Seltie's Article on "Teraphim."

an implement of divination (Ez. xxi, 26; Zek. x, 2) and Nebchadnezzar was represented as resorting to this method of divination. In Genesis xxxi, 30, we find that Teraphim were called Gods. Thus it is clear that the spirits of ancestors dwelt in Teraphim and people worshipped them. Since they were used for oracular purposes, they were set side by side with "Those who consult familiar spirits" and "wizards" (II Kings xxiii, 24).

Thus Hebrews believed that the disembodied spirits possessed a new and greater power than the living, and that they were almost like gods. I will show such beliefs through the cults of the dead.

(A) Mournings: Tears--

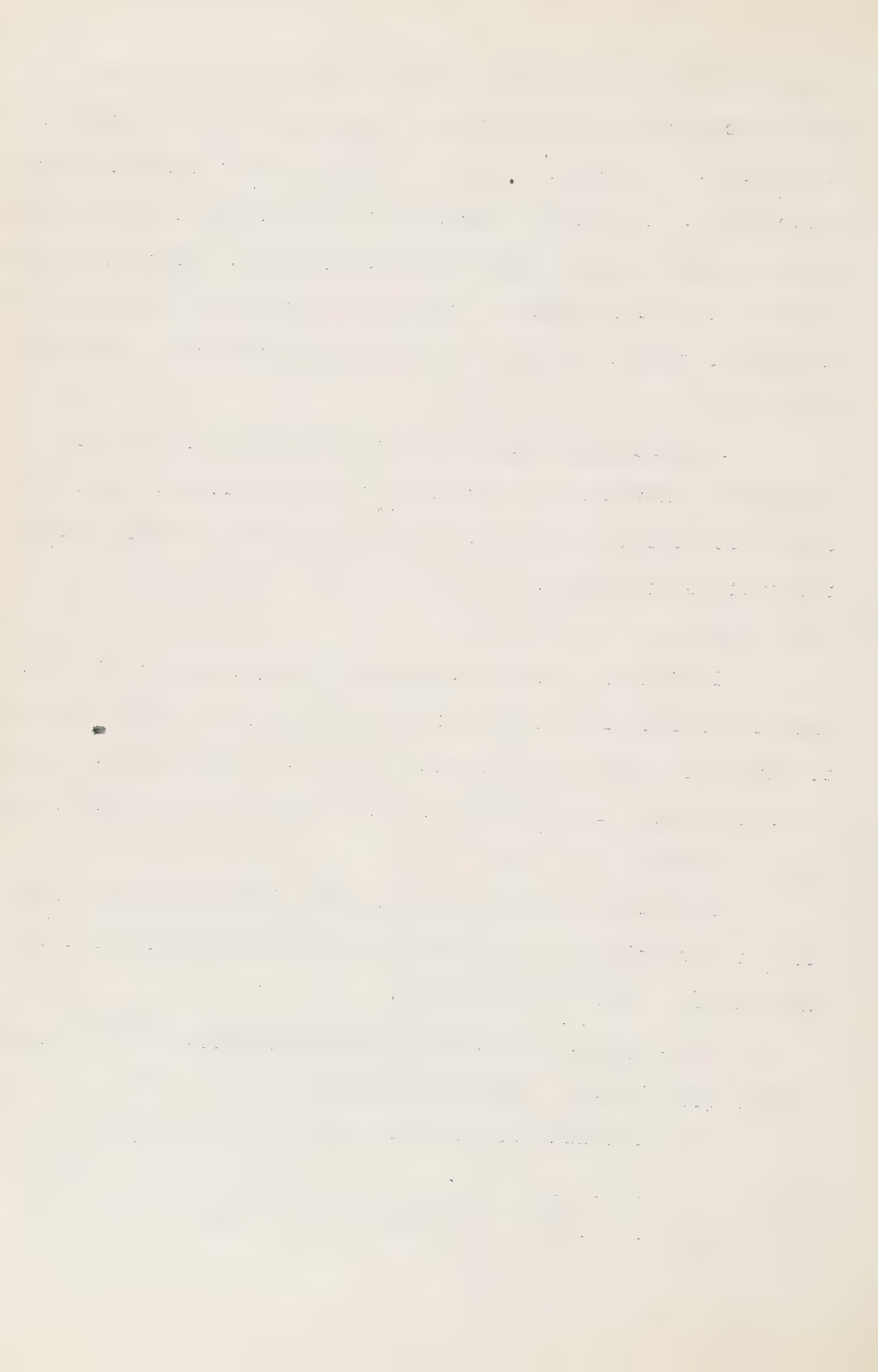
In Genesis xxiii, 2, we find the following: "And Sarah died in Kiriatharba, in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." Paton says, "Among the Hebrews the lament was a regular and important part of the funeral ceremonies." (1).

The comparison of the following three passages will bring the conclusion that they had the same form of mourning and shedding tears for the dead.

"And he laid his body in his own grave; and they mourn-
ed over him, saying, 'Alas, my brother!'" (I Kings xiii, 30).

"And the king covered his face, and the king cried with

(1) Paton, Spiritism and the Cult of the Dead in Antiquity,
p. 225.



a loud voice 'O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son'"
(II Sam. xix, 4).

"And Joash, the King of Israel, came down unto him, and wept over his face and said, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" (II Kings xiii, 14).

Stanley Cook says that "If the mourning is slight, the dead may be suspicious and take vengeance" (1). The mourning is not a spontaneous expression of sympathy with the tragedy, but obligatory and enforced by fear of the departed soul's anger. This view is confirmed when we find that similar laments were customary in the worship of the local gods (2). For instance we find a case in Judg. xi, 40, as follows: "The daughter of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year." Among the Polynesians, the tears which are shed upon the mourning, are received upon pieces of cloth, and offered as oblations to the dead (3).

(B) Hair-Offering:

In Amos viii, 10, Amos proclaims the doom of Israel in the name of the Lord, "I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head, and I will make it as the mourning for an only son, and the end

(1) Cook's note in R. Smith's "Religion of the Semites" p. 606

(2) Ezek. viii, 14; Zach. xii, 11.

(3) Frazer, Folk-lore in the O. T., Vol III, p. 285.

thereof as a bitter day" (Amos viii, 10).

And Micah, prophesying the calamities which were to overtake the southern kingdom, bids the inhabitants anticipate their woes by shaving themselves like mourners: "Make thee bald, and poll thee for the children of thy delight; enlarge thy baldness as the eagle, for they are going into captivity from thee" (Micah i, 16). The same customs of the shaving part of the head in mourning and cutting the flesh also appear to have been common to the Hebrews with their neighbours, the Philistines and the Moabites (1).

(C) The Offerings of Ones Blood:

In Deuteronomy xiv we read: "Ye are the children of Jehovah your god; Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead." This passage shows us that there was a practice of the offering of one's own blood in mourning for deceased kinsmen. And this custom was still practised after the Exile (2). W. R. Smith says, "Among the Arabs in like manner, as among Greeks and other ancient nations, it was customary in mourning to scratch the face to the effusion of blood" (3). Among the American Indians, "When a death has taken place, those who want to show the relations of the deceased their respect for the latter, lie in wait for these

(1) Frazer, Folk-lore in O. T., vol. III, p. 271

(2) Lev. xiv, 28; xxi, 5; Jerem. xvi, 6

(3) R. Smith, Lectures on Religion of Semites, p. 323

people, and if they pass they come out from their hiding-place, almost creeping, and intonate a mournful, plaintive hu, hu, hu, wounding their heads with pointed sharp stones until the blood flows down to their shoulders" (1).

In the ritual of the Semites and other nations, we find the same cases in which the worshipper sheds his own blood at the altar, as a means of recommending himself and his prayers to the diety. An instance is that of the priests of Baal at the contest between the god of Tyre and the god of Israel (2). In such a case, the object of the ceremony must be to tie or confirm a blood-bond between the worshipper and the god (3). The shedding of mourner's blood can hardly be interpreted otherwise than "as tribute paid or offerings presented to the spirit of the dead in order either to gratify his wishes or to avert his wrath (4).


(1) Frazer's Folk-lore in the O. T., Vol.III, p. 279. which quotes J. Baegert's "An Account of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Californian Peninsula" Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution for the year 1864, (Washington, 1865) p.387

(2) I Kings xviii, 28.

(3) R. Smith, Lectures On Relig. of Semites, p. 322

(4) Frazer, Folk-lore in the O. T., Vol. III, p. 299.

Chapter III. Soul And Spirit

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the departed spirits. These spirits, however, are not "Spirits" in the modern sense, for the original word for departed spirits is "rephaim"  which is correctly translated "shade" or "shadow." The dead also is often called meth or in its plural form, methim, as shown in the passage: "And when men say to you, 'Consult the ghosts and spirits that squeak and gibber! Should not a people consult its gods? On behalf of the living should they not consult the dead _____'" (Isaiah viii, 19). (Ch.T.)

At the time when Hebrew literature was written, the vague ideas about the dead disappeared from the main current of the Hebrew religion. The reason seems to me to be the growth of Yahwism. The prohibition of the worship of images by Yahwism had a great influence upon the conception of the soul and spirit. When Hebrews began to worship Yahweh without using any image, they began to think of God as a spiritual being.

The Hebrew people did not have a philosophic mind as the Greeks did, yet they distinguished God as apart from an image, and as spirit apart from flesh.

(A) Primitive Yahwism:

(a) Nephesh:

W. E. Staples explained the conception of nephesh of the Hebrew people saying, "The nephesh included the elements

that make up life, and may well come under our definition, 'being.' Therefore the nephesh was looked upon as the seat of the emotions, appetites, and desires" (1). It was also an ethereal substance that inhabited the basar (flesh). For example we find the following passage, "And his soul (nephesh) clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob,....and spake kindly to the damsel" (J) (Gen. xxxiv, 3). It was the nephesh that felt pleasure and pain: "And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul (nephesh)" (Gen. xlii, 21, E)

They believed in the continued existence of the disembodied soul. For example, when Elijah restored the life of the widow's son, he said, "Let this child's soul (nephesh) come into him again," and Yahweh hearkened unto the voice of Elijah and the nephesh of the child came into him again, and he revived (I Kings xvii, 21, 22).

They believed also in two entities which had close relations with the soul. These were spirit (ruah) and breath (neshmah).

(b) Neshmah:

Neshmah was not the nephesh, but the neshmah entering the body made a living nephesh. This belief is expressed clearly in the following passage: "And Yahweh God formed man

(1) Staples, Soul in the O. T. in Amer. Journal of Semitic Lang. and Lit. Vol. XLIV, No. 3 p. 145 (April 1928)

of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (וַיִּפְּחַק אֱלֹהִים בְּנֹשְׁמָתוֹ) and man became a living soul (וַיְהִי לְנֶשְׁמָה חַיָּה)" (Gen. ii, 7; ground work of J.). When neshmah went out from one's body, he was dead. In I Kings xvii, 17, we read as follows: "And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath (neshmah) left in him."

(c) Ruah:

As for spirit (ruah), it was used in many cases in different meanings. Originally, the spirit (ruah) was thought of as an agent of Yahweh which carried out Yahweh's will in man (1).

In Judg. vi, 34, we read: "But the spirit of Yahweh came upon Gideon; he blew a trumpet." So it is in Judg. xi, 29, "Then the Spirit of Yahweh came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh,...." In Gen. vi, 3(J), we read as follows: "And Yahweh said, My spirit shall not rule in man forever, for that he also is flesh." We can guess the conception of the J Document from this passage, it being that ruah belongs to Yahweh and will return to him after death.

(B) Prophetic Time (Before the exile):

(a) Nephesh:

(1) Staples, A.J.S.L. Vol. XLIV no. 3, p.146

During this period, Deuteronomy exerted great influence upon nephesh, and through that book it became the seat of physical appetites, health, and vigor. Thus we find the following passage: "And thou shalt say I will eat flesh, because thy soul (nephesh) desireth to eat flesh; thou mayst eat flesh, after all the desire of thy nephesh." (xii, 20)

We must recognize a peculiar use of nephesh during this period. At this time nephesh was used for the general term "Life." In Amos ii, 14b, we read as follows: "and the strong shall not strengthen his force; neither shall the mighty deliver himself (nephesh);" but there are only a few such cases, for Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah were more interested in the spirit (ruah) than nephesh.

In the Book of Jeremiah, the nephesh is expressed as it weeps (xiii, 17), loves (xii, 7), and faints (iv, 31); it is deceived (xxxix, 9), made to err (xlii, 2) and lives (xxxviii, 17, 20). And we must notice here that nephesh lost its active power. Staples explains this case by saying, "The object desired reflects upon the nephesh, creates a want, and the nephesh desires it," (1). This conception, and also a new one, is found in the Book of Ezekiel. In the new conception, ruah (spirit) takes the place of nephesh. For example, we find the following passage: "Whithersoever the spirit (ruah) was to go, they went; thither was the spirit (ruah) to go; and

(1) Staples, A.J.S.L. Vol.xliv, No. 3, p. 157

the wheels were lifted up beside them; for the spirit of living creature was in the wheels" (Ezek. i, 31, 21). It was the ruah, not nephesh, in the living being that gave it the power to move.

(b) Ruah:

In this period, the ruah of God is spoken of as operating upon or within men, producing physical strength, courage, prophetic frenzy and a prophetic message. For instance, we find the following passage: "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit (ruah) of God is?" (1). We find a like experience in Ezekiel as follows: "The ruah of Yahweh fell upon me,...." (xi,5). Micah ii,7, implies that the ruah of Yahweh is unlimited in power: "Is the ruah of Yahweh short?"

Ruah was considered to exist in man and it was the guiding force in human life. In Ezekiel xxi, 7, we read: "And every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit (ruah) shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water. "

(c) Relation between Yahwism and the Cult of the Dead:

As Dr. Bade says, the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods besides me," means the prohibition of the worship of other gods and obviously does not constitute monotheism, (2)

(1) Gen. xli, 38.

(2) Bade, O.T. In Light of Today, p.96

but rather monolatry. Thus Yahwism did not deny the existence of spirits of the dead, but the worship of them in any form whatsoever was sternly prohibited. In connection with the worship, necromantic acts were prohibited. In I Samuel xxviii, 9, we find that Saul made an effort to exterminate those who had familiar spirits and necromancers. In the Deuteronomic Law, we read the following: "There shall not be found with thee any one that make his son or daughter to pass through....an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer," (xviii, 10,11). There is also the protestation of the bringer of the tithe in Deut. xxvi, 14: "I have not given thereof for the dead." But these prohibitions were unsuccessful, because the cult of the dead was one of the most ancient and most firmly entrenched forms of religion among the Hebrews. And a further difficulty came from the fact that Sheol stood outside of the authority of Yahweh. As Yahwistic religion was a monolatry, in the Hebrew's mind the foreign lands stood outside of Yahweh's sphere of influence, and His activity was considered as being limited for the most part to the land of Canaan. The following passage illustrates: "For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If Jehovah shall indeed bring me again to Jerusalem then I will serve Jehovah" (II Sam. xv, 8). Under the same category, Sheol was regarded as lying outside of His rule. In the Middle Ages, Jewish rabbis, inferring from the lack of the formula, "and God saw that it was good"(Gen. i,6-8), made the addition that Sheol

was created on the second day (1). But in the J Document, Sheol is not mentioned along with the earth and heaven as created by Yahweh (Gen ii, 4b. ff).

As for the lordship of Sheol, in the Book of Isaiah, we find the following passage: "For Sheol cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth" (xxxviii, 18). We should say there is no trace of any divine government in the underworld till late post-exilic times when the one God became universal, (2). There is another phase in the attitude of Yahwism to the cult of the dead. Yahweh triumphed over the other gods of Canaan not by destroying them but by absorbing them. For example we find the name "Baaliah" in I Chronicles, and this name distinctly affirms that Yahweh is Baal. Also in the Greek manuscripts of Judges ix, 26, we find the equivalent name Jobaal, and it means Yahweh is Baal too (3).

The same method was taken by the Yahwistic movement in its relation to the spirits of the dead. Yahweh conquered them by assuming their functions and claiming their rites. Disease and insanity were now ascribed to His activity, and it was believed that "Jehovah smote Nabal, so that he died" (I Sam. xxv, 38). He also became avenger of shed blood (II Sam. xxi, 1 f.)

(1) Paton, Spiritism and Cult of the Dead in Antiquity, p. 264.

(2) Isaiah vii, 11, "Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God, deep unto Sheol or high unto heaven." This from the Hebrew O. T., but according to Cheyne "from Sheol" is a later addition (Book of Prophet Isaiah, Sacred Books of Old and New Test., Part 10, p. 10) and also he states that this is not in the Septuagint (The Prophecies of Isaiah, p. 45).

(3) H. P. Smith, The Religion of Israel p. 73

(C) Post-Exilic Period:

(a) Nephesh and Ruah:

In Genesis ii, 7 (J), we find that Yahweh formed man of dust from the ground, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life (רוּחַ חַיִּים) and man became a living soul. But in the P Document, the phrase "breath of life" (רוּחַ חַיִּים) gives way to "spirit of life" (Gen. vi, 17 P; vii, 15 P). Such is a sign of the change in the conception of spirit. R. H. Charles says, "...if we examine these elements more closely, we see that the soul (nephesh) is the result of the indwelling of the spirit in the material body, and has no independent existence of its own" (1). Peters says, "The active principle in God is ruah, wind or spirit. In the later literature, as the spiritual kinship of man to god is emphasized, 'spirit' tends to take the place of person (nephesh)', indicating the higher, immaterial element in man" (2). Thus it is clear that in the period when the P Document was written, nephesh became so weak that it could not exist by itself, and the ruah of God became more and more a humanized entity, until finally ruah came to mean the seat of strength, courage, anger or distress of man. As for instance, in Gen. xxvi, 35, we read as follows: "And they were a grief of mind (רוּחַ חַיִּים) unto Isaac

(1) Charles, Critical Hist. of Doctrine of Future Life, p.42

(2) Peters, Religion of Hebrew, p.448

and Rebekah" (P). Isaiah xxxviii, which is assigned by Kennett (1) to the period between Nebchadnezzar and Alexander the Great, contains the following passage: "O Lord, by these things men live; and wholly therein is the life of my ruah, wherefore recover thou me, and make me to live. Behold, it was for my peace that I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my nephesh delivered it from complete annihilation." Nephesh became extinct at death, leaving ruah as the guiding force. If immortality were to be given to man, it would have to be based upon ruah.

Thus ruah takes the place of nephesh, but nephesh itself is lifeless unless ruah is in it. Therefore in Haggai ii, 13, we find nephesh being used as a corpse. In Numbers vi, 6, we find the following passage: "All the days that he separateth himself unto a dead body (nephesh).". And also in Lev. xxi, 11, we read as follows: "neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;" concerning which Charles says, "So long as the spirit (ruah) is present, so long is the soul 'a living soul' (נִפְשׁ חַיָּה), but when the spirit is withdrawn, the vitality of the soul is destroyed, and it becomes a dead soul (נִפְשׁ מֵתָה) or corpse" (2). Thus there were two phases of life after death. If one looked from the side of nephesh, life after death was

(1) Kennett, R. H., The Composition of the Book of Isaiah in the Light of Hist. and Arch., (The Schweich Lectures, 1903 British Academy)

(2) Charles, A Crit. Hist. of Doctrine of Future Life, p.42.

utterly powerless. But if one stood on the side of the ruah, he could see the immortal life in communion with God. In Psalms lxxxviii we find an example of the former case: "Yahweh, God of my salvation! for my soul (nephesh) is full of troubles; and my living draweth nigh unto Sheol....I am as a man that hath no strength. Among dead....., like those slain by the sword that lie in the grave, which thou rememberest no more; and which are cut off from thy hand."

On the other hand we find the following passage: "The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it," (Eccles. xii, 7). In these passages the vitality of the human soul depends completely upon the indwelling spirit of God, and its activity ceases when the divine breath is withdrawn. Thus in striking contrast to the ancient doctrine which ascribed interest in the living, and superhuman powers, to the dead, the late prophetic and subsequent literature denies them all activity.

(b) Sheol:

As death consists in the withdrawal by God of the spirit of life, the source of energy and vital power, the personalities in Sheol are very feeble and flaccid. In Eccles. ix, 5, we find this passage: "The living know that they must die, the dead know not anything." Their abode is called "the land of forgetfulness" (Psalms lxxxviii, 12). It is also said of them: "his sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not, and they are brought low, and he perceiveth it not of them"

(Job xiv, 21). The Post-Exilic prophets and writers believed in the Lordship of Yahweh in Sheol. For example, we find the following passage: "Sheol is naked before God, and Abaddon hath no covering" (Job xxvi, 6). In this passage, Yahweh is apparently represented as controlling Sheol. But such a conception seems to be inconsistent with another passage of the same book, for in Chapter vii, 9,10, we read as follows:

"As the cloud is consumed and vanished away, so he that goeth down to Sheol shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."

According to R. S. Franks, "The point is that he cannot think of his suffering without viewing it as a ground against God" (1).

Thus in the Book of Job, there are two conceptions of Sheol which come from different standpoints. The one that sees Sheol as it is, outside of God's rule, comes from his consciousness of sin and punishment. Sheol is the place of punishment from where none can escape. But the other conception, that God is the ruler of Sheol, comes from his consciousness of communion with God. The righteous dead can awake and escape from the imminent peril of death. In the latter conception, God enters into Sheol and none can hide himself from him. This latter develops into the ideas of immortality and the resurrection.

(1) Peake, A Commentary on the Bible, p. 351

Chapter IV. Immortality

(A) National Immortality:

As I have stated, the Babylonians had no hope of immortality. The Hebrews, however, came very near it in their religious thinking. There were two Hebrew conceptions of immortality. One was individual immortality and the other was group or national immortality.

According to Dr. McCown, "the Hebrew national hope involved two ideas. (A) the day of Yahweh, when he should manifest and vindicate himself and them, and, (B) the new era that should follow" (1).

The popular conception of the day of Yahweh was "the day of Israel's vindication against their enemies through Yahweh" (2). This popular belief arose from the popular assumption that Israel was the chosen people of Yahweh (3). But Amos could not look for the day of Yahweh with such optimism as the people were expressing, because he saw the moral condition of mankind. He found that people "have sold the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes they that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor and turn aside

(1) McCown, The Promise of His Coming, p.39

(2) Charles, Eschatology, A Crit. Hist. of Doct. of Future Life, p.86

(3) McCown, op cit., p.32

the way of the meek; and a man and his father go unto the same maiden to profane the name of Yahweh" (Amos ii, 6,7). Also, according to their beliefs, Yahweh's punishment was an ethnic one; it was well expressed in the following passage: "They lean upon Yahweh, and say, Is not Yahweh in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us" (Micah, iii, 11). But with Amos, the conception of punishment became moral rather than ethnic. The sins of Israel itself deserved punishment. Therefore Amos declared, "Woe unto you that desire the day of Yahweh! It is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of Yahweh be darkness, and not light?" (Amos v, 18-20). Isaiah spoke about the day of Yahweh as follows: "Through the wrath of Yahweh of hosts is the land burnt up; and the people are as the fuel of fire....." (Isaiah ix, 19). Through Zephaniah, the punishment of Yahweh included also other nations. In Zephaniah ii, 4, 5, we find passages as follow:

"For Gaza shall be deserted, Ashkelon desolate,

Ashdod stormed by noon, Ekron cut to pieces.

Woe betide the dwellers on the coast, the Cretan settlers,

For the Eternal's decree is against you:

I will destroy you, O land of the Philistines (Canaan),

till not an inhabitant is left,..." (Moffat's trans.)

The pre-Exilic prophets said little concerning the new era (1). After the Exile, this expectation became more and more intensive and it had two different aspects. The one is the material side and the other is the spiritual. Though I call it the spiritual side of the kingdom it does not mean spiritual in our modern sense, because, in their expectation, the Kingdom is invariably bound up with the land which Yahweh gave to her, through the Fathers. By the material side of the coming Kingdom, it is Yahweh who gives material prosperity in the land of Israel. Ezekiel described it as follows: "I will feed them upon good pasture, their grazing shall be on the uplands of Israel, where they shall lie down in a good place and graze on rich pasture amid the heights of Israel. I myself will tend my flock, I will take them to their pasture" says the Lord the Eternal; (M.T., Ezekiel xxxiv, 14, 15), (2). Here the material side of the ideal future is set forth in rural imagery. So it is in Amos ix, 13, which is generally recognized as belonging to the post-Exilic period, (3). In this passage the

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- (1) In Amos ix, 14ff and Isaiah xi, 11f, Yahweh is expressed as he brings back the dispersed of His people, but these passages belong to post-Exilic time. (Harper, Amos And Hosea, "I.C.C." p.195; and Gray, Isaiah i-xxxix, "I.C.C." p.223) Also Hosea xiv, 5, and Isaiah xxvii, 2-6, describe Israel's future glory, but these passages belong to the post-Exilic time. (W.R. Harper, Amos and Hosea, "I.C.C." p.408, and Kennett, Comp. of Isaiah in Light of Hist. & Arch., p.85)
- (2) Opinion as to the authenticity of the book of Ezekiel has varied. Wardle thinks we can regard the first thirty-nine chapters, allowing for minor supplements, as from Ezekiel himself, (Abingdon Commentary, p.715)
- (3) According to W. R. Harper, this passage belongs to the post-Exilic time. (Harper, Amos and Hosea, p.195)

future ideal life is rural, and corn will ripen so quickly that there will be hardly an interval between ploughing and reaping. Also there will be an abundant return, a rebuilding of cities, and a replanting of vineyards, and Israel shall be permanently reestablished, (ix, 13-15).

In the oracle of the book of Jeremiah (xxxi, 12), we read as follows:

"So they shall gather singing on the sights of Sion,
all radiant over the Eternal's bounty,
yearlings of sheep and cattle, corn, oil and wine,
for them life shall be like a watered garden,
The girls shall delight in dancing,
young men and old shall be merry," (M.T.) (1)

But with Trito-Isaiah, a glorified Jerusalem comes into the foreground of the vision of an ideal future. In Isaiah lx,2, we read as follows, "Though darkness covers all the earth, and a black cloud shrouds the nations, yet the Eternal shines out upon you, his splendour on you gleams." Isaiah ix, 22a: "The smallest sept becomes a clan,

the least grows to a mighty nation," (M.T.)

Thus they expected to be a mighty nation in an ideal kingdom. This expectation made a further advance to the idea of a long life. We can see many marks of its development in the Old

(1) According to A. O. Welch, (Jeremiah in the Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 697) this passage belongs to the same period of Deutero-Isaiah

Testament. In Isaiah xxxiii, 24, we read as follows:

"No inhabitants shall say: I am sick;

the people that dwell therein have had iniquity forgiven." (1)

Thus, in their ideal state in Zion, there will be no more sickness. As a climax of this thought we find the passage in Isaiah lxxv, 22b which reads as follows:

"They shall not build, and another inhabit;

Nor shall they plant, and another eat

For as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people,

And the work of their hands shall my chosen ones enjoy to
the end." (Ch. T.)

"The days of a tree" means a long life. According to G. W. Wade, (2), this means "the duration of life amongst the godly will be comparable with that of forest trees" and this explanation is approved by the passage in Job xiv, 8, 9, which is as follows:

"If its root becomes old in the ground,

And its trunk dies in the soil,

At the scent of water it will bud,

And put forth shoots like a young plant." (Ch. T.)

Therefore Moffatt translated Isaiah lxxv, 22(b) as follows:

(1) G. H. Box, Book of Isaiah, p.152 (London, 1916) As it is generally adopted, Isaiah xxxiii is the post-exilic work.

(2) Wade, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, p.405 (Westminster Commentary, London, 1911)

"My people shall live long as lives a tree,
long shall my chosen folk enjoy their earnings."

Also in Isaiah lxxv, 20, we read as follows:

"Never more shall there come from thence a babe of (Few) days,
Nor an old man that does not fulfil his allotted span;
(But the youngest a hundred years old shall die)" (1).

(Box's Translation)

Here is described the miraculous extension of the normal limits of life. And this becomes a common feature in apocalyptic passages describing the felicity of the coming age.

The ideal kingdom has also the spiritual side. According to Jeremiah, the restoration of Israel will be accompanied by a change of heart wrought by Yahweh. Through Him, people will receive "a heart, to know" Yahweh and they shall return to him with their whole heart, (Jer. xxiv, 7), (2).

And Zion is covered with a cloud of smoke by day and the glow of flaming fire by night, because "the glory of the Lord will be a canopy and a bower over all" (Isaiah iv, 4-6) (3). And the righteous remnant is clearly expressed in Isaiah x, 20-23, (4), which reads as follows: "the remnant of Israel,....will

(1) According to Box, a late theological gloss, the stroph is complete without it, and line is too long (Box, Isaiah, p.347)

(2) According to H. Creelman, belongs to 588-586 B.C., (An Intro. to O.T., Chronologically Arr., N.Y., Macmillan, 1917, p.111)

(3) Isaiah iv, 3-6 is post-Exilic (Gray, I.C.C., Book of Isaiah, p.79)

(4) These verses are probably the work of some late student of Scripture, (Gray, Isaiah, p.203)

lean in loyal trust on the Lord."

Thus the spiritual phase of the kingdom of God centers in the spiritual relation of the people and Yahweh. Though the name "David" is often given to the ideal ruler, it is not a constant feature and he is only a person who will rule with Yahweh's justice. Yahweh's rule in the Kingdom of God is rather emphasized by it. This divine rule easily affected the view of life after death. In Isaiah xxvi, 19, we read as follows:

"Thy dead shall arise: (shall live, my dead bodies) (1)

Awake and shout for joy ye that dwell in the dust!

For a dew of light is Thy dew (O Jehovah),

And Earth shall bring forth Shades." (Box's Translation)

As Gray suggested, "thy dead" means "those who died loyal to Him, or even were slain for His sake" (2). "That dwell in the dust" means dead in Sheol, and "dew of light" is Divine influence that will bring about the revival of their lives. But there is another interpretation, which tells us that this passage speaks allegorically, and that death and burial mean exile, and that by resurrection from the grave is meant revival to national life. Such differences of opinion depend upon the time when this passage was written. According to Gray, the rhythmical structure of xxvi, 1-19, is remarkable and unusual (3).

(1) The verse in parenthesis is not expressed in the Septuagint. It is probably a gloss inserted to emphasize the idea of bodily resurrection, (Box, Isaiah, p. 121)

(2) Gray, Isaiah, p. 446

(3) Gray, op cit. p. 434

And this is generally agreed to put these verses in the Persian period, (1). Then it seems to me that it is not logical to prophesy the freedom from the Exile in the Persian time.

In the preceding passages, xxvi, 7-11, the writer tells us how they are waiting for Yahweh's discriminating judgments. Thus it is natural to take this passage as an expectation of the resurrection of the righteous from death. But in this passage, the resurrection was limited to righteous Israelites who will rise and share in the glories of the renewed nation.

(B) Individual Immortality:

In I Kings xvii, 22, we find a passage which tells us that Jehovah heard the voice of Elijah, and "the soul of the child came unto him again, and he revived." In II Kings iv, 35; xiii, 21, we find also that Yahweh restored the dead to life. In a strict sense, these are examples of resuscitation and not resurrection. But still these stories are interesting because of Yahweh's relation with the dead, and because they contain the germs of later ideas of the resurrection.

In a later time we find the conception of individual immortality in the Psalms. For instance we find a passage in chapter fifty-six and verse thirteen as follows:

"For thou hast delivered my soul from death
Hast thou not delivered my feet from falling,
That I may walk before God
In the light of the living?"

(1) Creelman, An Intro. to O. T., p. 100

But still, if we analyze this conception, we find that it is not a belief in immortality. Through this passage we can find no hope of the eternal existence of the soul. This Psalm is enough to show us that it is possible for man's soul to escape from the imminent peril of death, and also that the soul is capable of divine help beyond the grave. But is it not meaningful that the Hebrew believed that the soul could escape from death and live with Yahweh? We find another passage as follows:

"I laid me down and slept;

I awake; for Yahweh sustaineth me." (Ps.iii,5)

In Psalms cxxxix, 18, we find these words, "that when I awake, I am still with Thee." This Psalm shows us the relation of man and God in the future life. As Welch said, "The Psalmist embodied his sense of the infinite worth of the inner life through its hold on God" (1).

In Psalms xxx,3, we find this:

"Yahweh, Thou hast brought up my soul from Sheol

Thou has kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit." This is very near to belief in immortality, at least it strikes the key-note upon which the belief is based.

In our conception, immortality has at least two centres. One is the eternal life. But in these Psalms, we can not find the idea of eternity. The second point in our conception is

(1) Welch, The Psalter In Life, Worship & History, p. 111.

that immortality is not the continuity of the earthly life but it is the righteous, and joyous life, including the victory of the righteous. The conception of immortality comes from the moral demand. It is postulated because of injustice in this world. But in the Hebrew conception, the individual immortality did not come from the moral demand, but it came from the desire to escape from the miserable life of Sheol. The reason is, in my mind, that the individual lost himself in some union, such as the family, the tribe, or the people, and the moral sense of the Hebrew functioned only in his national life. Thus the demand of the righteous Israel inaugurated the idea of the splendid Messianic Kingdom. Individually, the Hebrews were lacking in a real faith in personal immortality.

Therefore in the Psalms we find the expression of the desire to escape from Sheol and to live with Yahweh. Thus arises the conception that Sheol is the future abode of the wicked only. For example we find the following Psalm:

"But man being in honour abideth not.

He is like the beasts that perish,

This their way is their folly;

Yet after them men approve their sayings.

They are appointed a flock for Sheol;

Death shall be their shepherd,

And the upright shall have dominion over them in
the morning;

And their beauty shall be for Sheol to consume,

That there be no habitation for it.

But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol;"

(Psalms xlix, 12ff)

As for the blessed future life, two Psalms: xvi and xvii, express their conviction clearly. In Psalm xvi, 9ff, we read as follows:

"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth;

My flesh also shall dwell in safety,

For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol.

Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption,

Thou wilt show me the path of life

In thy presence is fulness of joy;

In thy right hand these are pleasures for ever more."

In this Psalm, the idea of life after death is expressed more definitely, because it is "the path of life,"--more than the mere escape from the peril in Sheol. But still eternity is in the hand of God and has no clear connection with the future life. As for the words "for ever more," I will quote here the comment of J. M. P. Smith. He says "The Hebrew word 'olam', sometimes translated by 'eternity,' or in adverbial phrases 'forever' is by no means to be given the idea of endless duration. Not infrequently it is applied to the life time of a man (e.g. Exodus xxi, 6; I Samuel i, 22) or other limited periods" (1).

(1) Smith, The Religion of the Psalms, pp.98-99

The conception of rephaim (shades), which the Hebrews had from the earliest time clung to their ideas and they could not get rid of them. As Sheol was a dark place until far after the Exile, the conception of rephaim existed as dwelling in Sheol. Even in the Psalms, which I have quoted, their ideal future life is out of the darkness of Sheol. But in the book of Job, we can find some relation between Yahweh and Sheol. In Job xiv, 22, we read as follows:

"Only his flesh upon him hath pain,

And his soul (י נפשו) upon him mourneth."

(Trans. by Driver and Gray, I.C.C., Job Vol.1)

Thus "his soul" survives death and it can mourn for his dreary existence in Sheol. But this thought went on further and we find the famous passage of Job xix, 25-27, which reads as follows:

(1) "But I know that my vindicator liveth,

and that hereafter he will stand up upon the dust,

(26) And.....,

And away from my flesh I shall behold God.

(27) Whom I shall behold (to be) on my side,

and mine eyes shall see (to be) unestranged,

My reins fail with longing within me." (Trans. Driver & Gray)

This passage, especially 26a, is obscure and uncertain. We must recognize that it has suffered considerable corruption in the course of transmission. The Septuagint and also the Vulgate

(1) Driver and Gray, I. C. C., The Book of Job, p.171-174

digress from the Hebrew text and from each other, and that text itself presents unmistakable evidence of those detrimental changes.

C. J. Ball also tried to find the original form of the passage and he seems to be successful to a certain extent, (1).

He made a tentative reconstruction as follows:

כִּי אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי גֹאֲלִי
וְאַחֶר עַל-עֶפְרַיִם יִקְוֶה
אַחֶר בְּעוֹדִי נִקְמֹת אֶל
וּבְבִשְׁרִי אֶחְצֶה אֱלֹהִים :
(Is xIii 8) אֲשֶׁר־נָפַד וְלֹא אֶחָד
(Is xIiii 12) וְעֵינַי יִרְאֶהוּ וְלֹא-זָר
כִּלְוִי כָל־יְמֵי בְּחַכּוֹתַי
[עַד-כִּי יָבֹא קֶסְלִי :]

According to his own translation, we read as follows, (2):

"For I, I know my Avenger;
And at last He will rise up on earth;
I shall see, while I yet live, El's revenges, (Ps. lviii, 12)
And in my flesh I shall gaze on Eloah!
I shall behold Him and not Another,
And mine eyes will look on Him, and not a strange god!
My kidneys are wasted with my waiting
(Until my hope shall come.)

(1) and (2) Ball, Book of Job, Oxford, 1922, pp.278-9

Though it is difficult to see the original form exactly, we can get the general conception through these, Driver's and Ball's translations. The main point of the thought which lies behind this passage is the writer's conviction that he can see God in Sheol. This does not reveal a desire to get out of Sheol, but it shows us that the eyes of the dead "will look upon Him" in Sheol.

Chapter V. Resurrection

There were four theories which led to the idea of the resurrection of the dead. The first was the conception of spirit (ruah). As I have discussed it in the second chapter, ruah was an agent of God, but later it became an active entity of man. This was the Hebrew belief in the existence of a germinal principle of Divine power in man. The second consisted of the traditional stories of the translation of Enoch and Elijah (Gen. v, 24; II Kings ii, 11) which show God's power and His relation to the dead. The third cause was the expectation of the kingdom of God. And the last was the growing religious individualism.

A specific reference to the hope of a resurrection is found in Ezekiel's vision, (Ezekiel xxxvii, 1-14). In verses 5 and 6 we find passages as follow: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and ye shall live and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you and cover you with skin and put breath (ruah) in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah." And in verse 12 we find the following: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel." The truth which is contained in these stories is that the exiled people are as good as dead in their graves. Then Ezekiel hears a Divine voice asking, "Can these bones live?" and gradually these are born.

This is a mass resurrection of the people rather than individual rebirth, and stress is put on the fact that the restoration of Israel should come through God. This dramatic expression is not meant for the teaching of resurrection. The underlying conception of man found here is similar to that of the P Document in Genesis. Man is created with the flesh and the spirit or breath (ruah) of God.

In Daniel xii, 2, we find the first clear form of resurrection. In the Apocalypse of Daniel we discover the visions and their interpretations, but all these culminate in the final establishment of the Kingdom of the Messiah. In this connexion it should be mentioned that Daniel is the earliest example of a fully developed Apocalypse. In this book the Doctrine of the Resurrection is distinctly asserted.

In Chapter xii, verse 2, we read as follows: "And many of those who sleep in that land of dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and others to everlasting reproach and contempt" (Ch. T.). Many discussions have been held concerning the resurrection conception in the Book of Daniel. This is largely because Daniel's doctrine of the resurrection has several points in common with that of Mazdeism. The first point is that both teach a resurrection of the righteous and wicked. The second is that both alike combine it with the final judgment. Thus many Old Testament scholars classified this passage of Daniel under the section of Persian influence (1). It seems

(1) Paton, Spiritism and Cult of Dead in Antiquity, p. 283.

to me that it is impossible to deny the influence of the Mazdeism thought, but it is concerned only with the mentioning of both groups, the righteous and the wicked. As for the resurrection to eternal life, it is a natural product of Hebrew thought. However, it arose a long time after the Exile. This passage is cited in the Psalms of Solomon in chapter ii, 16, which was written between 70-40 B. C.

In the Old Testament, there is another passage which shows us the punishment of the wicked in the life after death: Isaiah lxvi, 24, "And then they shall go outside to gloat over the corpses of the apostates, for the worms in the corpses never die, and the fire that burns them is never extinguished, and they shall be a disgust to all men" (M. T.). But as Moffatt shows us in this translation, and also as Box says in his book, this passage is clearly a later addition (1). The Book of Isaiah ends at verse 22 of the same chapter.

In the Book of Daniel, we find another passage which affirms the resurrection: "But do thou go (to the end) (2) and thou shalt rest, and shalt rise for thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. xii, 13).

The book closes with a consolation addressed to Daniel

(1) Box, Isaiah, p. 357

(2) According to R. Smith, this word "to the end" (לְעֵד) seems to be advertently copied in here after לְעֵד from the similar combination just below לְעֵד לְעֵד. This is actually supported by the original text of the Septuagint. (J. A. Montgomery, I. C. C., The Book of Daniel, p. 477)

personally. He is to wait the end in the grave, from which, in the resurrection spoken of in verse 2 he will arise to take his appointed place.

Conclusion

As I have stated previously, the Babylonians did not reach the hope of immortality. When I reviewed the Babylonian conception of life after death, a question came into my mind: "Why did they conceive such a gloomy idea of life after death?"

The myths which I quoted, passed through a long history and finally arrived at the literary form which they now possess. But I was disappointed in not finding any progress of religious thought in them. If there is any kind of progress in them it is a systematization of exorcism. We have often heard about the temple schools of Eridu and Nippur. We can imagine that there should have existed some group of thinkers who would possibly have led the people to a higher stage of thinking. For example, in the Epic of Gilgamesh, we find a synthesis of two traditions. One of them is the popular Ishtar myth and the other is the creation theory of the astronomers. According to Jastrow, this is "a trait which shows how the old nature myth has been elaborated in passing through the hands of the literati" (1). The popular myths and legends have passed through

(1) Jastrow, Relig. of Babylonia and Assyria, p.573

the hands of the priests and they have been given a literary form. Why the speculations of the temple-schools should not have led to the doctrine of a more cheerful destiny for the dead, such as a life with God, is a mystery.

I am forced to draw the following conclusions:

(A) The old animisms which developed into the complete forms of magic and true religious beliefs lost their power. As Dr. A. H. Sayce says, "Deep down in the very core of Babylonian religion lay a belief in what Professor Tylor has called animism.....As in Egypt, so too in Babylonia, animism was the earliest form of religion, and it was through animism that the Sumerian formed his conception of the divine" (1).

(B) The second and the more important one is that there is an almost complete absence of all ethical considerations in connection with the dead (2). Julian Morgenstern says, "Sickness was caused by evil spirits, the messengers of god's anger....Therefore in Babylonian religious literature, the expressions: sin, uncleanness, sickness, possession by evil spirits, are pure synonyms" (3).

Thus they had an idea of sin, but it was merely a synonym of uncleanness. Usually immortality is postulated because of the injustice of this world. The problem of the

(1) Sayce, The Relig. of Ancient Egypt and Bab., p.276

(2) Jastrow, Relig. Belief in Bab. and Assyria, pp.35lff

(3) Morgenstern, Doctrine of Sin in Babylonia, p.3

suffering of the righteous, and the prospering of the wicked, demands a judgment in a future life. But since sin, in Babylonian thought, meant only uncleanness, no idea of immortality arose.

As for the Hebrew people, they inherited animism as did the Babylonians and they also shared many other common elements with the Babylonians. But they also inherited another element, that was Yahwism. This religious movement went on until at last they reached the gate of immortality. As the value of personality was not fully recognized, their view was quite vague, yet they arrived at the aspiration of a future glorious life in which God would be with them.

There are two main reasons for their arriving here; they are: (A) Monotheism, and (B) the failure of their national hopes.

(A) Yahweh was the only god and He did not allow any images. Also, the relation of Yahweh to the Hebrew people was a moral relationship--He demanded righteousness, not sacrifices. Their moral and religious conceptions were concentrated on the righteous God, Yahweh.

(B) Whenever they suffered they thought it was the result of sin, or the punishment of Yahweh. But after the Exile they lost this conception, because they reached the conclusion that misfortune was not the result of sin. Israel was no worse than the other nations, yet their retribution did not come even after the Exile. Then the new doctrine of retribution

had come, which was the hope of retribution in the future life. This hope was not accepted by the Sadduceeans, as we read:

"Forget it not, for there is no returning again
Him thou shalt not profit, and thou wilt hurt thyself,
Remember the sentence upon him; for so also shall thine be;
Yesterday for me, and to-day for thee.
When the dead is at rest, let his remembrance rest;
And be comforted for him, when his spirit departeth from
him." (Ecclesiasticus xxxviii, 16-23)

But the Pharisees believed in immortality (Josephus, Ant. xviii, 1.3) and their hope continued until at last it made its greatest progress in Jesus Christ and the resurrection. A great product from the Hebrew history of sufferings does not remain meaningless. The hope of immortality is not merely a theory but a conviction which was born out of real struggles. The hope of immortality which we find in the Old Testament will remain forever as a monument to human history.

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